1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

The men taking part at the *asaŭ ldiwana* had the whole body painted black and wore nothing but the loin cloth. They had to be ceremonially "pure" (*sunu*), a condition which was obtained by abstinence from women, salt, red peppers, and intoxicating liquor. Any one daring to come to the festival in a state of "uncleanness" was supposed to be killed by an awful giant, some sort of evil spirit, which came from some neighboring hill, and walked about the house with a quiver full of arrows. He was well treated and given plenty of *puput* (maize liquor), for every one was afraid of him.

At the *asaŭ ldiwana* trials of endurance took place in order to train the young men in supporting pain without the slightest groan. They also had the object of settling disputes which had been in suspense for some time. One man leans over and lets his opponent strike his back as hard as he can with the point of the elbow, until the latter is tired of punching. He is not supposed to utter the least groan nor show any other sign of pain. From time to time he merely says *yaŭ al yaŭ*, "I am a man," whereupon his adversary replies *yaŭ bik al yaŭ*, "I am also a man." When the latter is tired of punching the two men change places and he has to submit to the same rough treatment of his back by the other. Anyone giving up the struggle before his opponent is tired of striking is considered a coward; occasionally death has resulted from the effects of these terrible blows.

This method of fighting is unknown to the Miskito. The latter box a little, but it seems to be a point of honor with them to give and take blows in turn, and not to try how often they can strike each other as much as how long they can stand up to it.

PREPARATION OF AN EXPEDITION.—When the Miskito projected an armed expedition against the other Indian tribes or against the Spaniards they consulted one of their principal sukyas in order to hear if they would be successful. If the sukya's prediction, after having consulted the spirits, was unfavorable regarding the issue, the intended expedition was abandoned (M. W.: 307–308).

Both of these tribes were in the habit of painting the body hideously, perhaps with the object of scaring the enemy. Fair fighting was unknown. Attacks were carried out during the night, the enemy being taken by surprise.

INTERTRIBAL WARS.—The Miskito and Sumu were continually at war with each other as far back as the seventeenth century (Dampier: I, 9–10; M. W.: 300, 302, 305). These tribal wars continued throughout the eighteenth century and turned out to the advantage of the Miskito, who, having received European arms through the agency of the buccaneers from Jamaica, were able to conquer several subtribes of the Sumu from whom they collected tribute in the shape of canoes, deer skins, maize, cacao, rubber, etc.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

whistling and blowing over it for about 5 or 10 minutes. Should he suffer a relapse and undergo another treatment the sukya will demand another fee.

RELIGION: SUPREME BEING, TRIBAL HEROES, SPIRITS, CREATION OF MAN, DELUGE, CHRISTIANIZATION

SUPREME BEING.—The religious system of these tribes has been fast disintegrating for the last generation. Nowadays both tribes believe in the existence of a Supreme Deity, which the Miskito call *Wan-Aisa*, "Our Father," and the Sumu *Ma-Papak* or *Ma-Papaki*, "Our Father" or "Sun-Father." Both tribes also make use of the name *Dawan*, "Master" or "Lord." This conception has probably been borrowed from Christianity; still Exquemelin (Engl. ed.: 251) states that in his days (1671) the Miskito believed in one God. This Deity, which dwells in heaven, is sometimes confused with the various tribal heroes. According to these Indians, God has created the world and the inhabitants, but He does not appear to worry a great deal about the individual being, nor is He able to ward off the various dangers which continually menace mankind; consequently He is not honored with offerings, prayers, worship, or sacrifice. Furthermore, He lives so far away from earth that it is impossible to enter into relations with Him, and He can not be approached by man.

MINOR GODS AND TRIBAL HEROES.—Both the Miskito and the Sumu believe in the existence of a number of supernatural beings, living formerly on earth like man. These are the sun (M.: *yu, lapta;* S.: *ma*), thunder (M.: *aiwani;* S.: *aiwana*), moon (M.: *kati;* S.: *wdiko*), rainbow (M.: *kumadora;* S.: *wayauli, wayuli*), stars and planets (M.: *slilma;* T., P.: *yala;* U.: *ma-baka* "small sun"), the Pleiades (M.: *pupu-wihta;* S.: *kalpas*). According to a Sumu myth a bright planet, called by the Miskito *kati-maya*, "the moon's wife," which is seen just above the new moon, was originally a girl, who was raised by her finger tips by *Udo*, the moon god (Heath, c: 77). These various heavenly bodies are supposed by the Sumu to travel in canoes, a belief which is also held by the Cuna of Panama.[80]

Some of these supernatural beings are in charge of the elements and are responsible for the great calamities which appear occasionally. The god of the wind and of the air, called by the Miskito *Prahaku* or *Asbiya*,[81] sends the hurricanes and the great inundations which destroy the plantations and kill the livestock. His representative is

[80] Erland Nordenskiöld, Les Rapports entre l'Art, la Religion, et la Magie chez les Cuna et les Choco. Journal de la Société des Americanistes de Paris, tome XII, Paris, 1920, p. 150.

[81] Cf. "obi" or "obeah," a species of sorcery practiced among West Indian Negroes.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

the rainbow, which the Panamaka Sumu sometimes call *walasa unisa*, "the devil is vexed." At its appearance the Indians hide their children in the huts so that they may not see it nor point at it; by the latter act the outstretched arm or hand is supposed to become crippled and covered with terrible sores.

Thunder (M.: *alwani;* S.: *alwana*) is sometimes confounded with God among the heathen Miskito and Sumu. According to some, he created the world and governs it by appointing the seasons; others say that he lived formerly on earth and was the first man. When he thunders, it is to warn man that a flood is coming. From an Ulwa Indian, originally from the headwaters of Rio Grande, I obtained the following story, which I propose naming—

The Origin of the Kiawa Rocks

God (*Mo-Papakki*) sent Thunder (*Alwana*) as his representative to the earth to instruct the people in agriculture and in other arts and crafts. One day while Alwana was absent from home an evil spirit, named Kiawa, came and carried off his wife.

A parrot (*wardiwa*) informed Thunder of this fact while the latter was planting pine trees on a big rock at a place called to this day *Alwana kuma-ka rumpak* (in Miskito, *Alwani di-sal-ka lulkan*). This locality is on Rio Quiguasca, the upper course of Rio Grande; pine-covered rocks and low hills extend there to the very edge of the river.

Upon hearing what had happened, Thunder left his work in order to wrest his wife from Kiawa. He found the latter at his home on Rio Iya, a tributary of Rio Tuma. Kiawa was drunk at the time, but he was a powerful giant, and Thunder was unable to master him at first.

When the fight began Kiawa turned into a boa constrictor (*wyail*) and swallowed his own wife, in order to prevent her from falling into the hands of Thunder. The two enemies then vied with each other in growing tall, in order to reach the clouds. Each in turn outgrew the other, until finally Thunder's head overtopped the clouds, which enabled him to press his enemy to the ground. With his long machete (*masat*) he then cut Kiawa in pieces, thereby restoring to life all the people who had been swallowed by the giant. The various parts of the latter turned into rocks which are visible on the upper Rio Iya, and are still known by the name Kiawa. The Indians claim that sometimes these rocks bleed, and that certain parts of the giant, as his head and navel, may still be distinctly seen.[70]

Spirits.—More powerful than God or the various tribal heroes are the numerous evil spirits (M.: *wlasa, lasa;*[71] T., P.: *walasa;* U.:

[70] Heath (b: 419) gives a slightly different version of this story.

[71] Dampier (I, 9) already states that the devil is called *Wallessa* by the Miskito.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

nawal"[72]), which inhabit the hills, caves, deep water pools, etc. They are extremely malevolent and they are ever ready to injure the people, causing disease or death. They are especially dangerous after sundown, when the fear of them makes a coward of the most daring and courageous Indians.

The Indian has a natural reluctance to reveal his religious ideas, especially such as he suspects to seem ridiculous to a stranger. It is therefore very difficult to obtain reliable information from them pertaining to this subject. At the death of a person the material body undergoes dissolution and one or more spirits are set free and roam about doing mischief, until they are directed by the sukya to the Hereafter. Animals likewise have spirits, or they may be possessed by evil spirits.

Conspicuous hills are generally haunted by evil spirits, [illegible] latter are said to have carved the petroglyphs found at certain large river falls. Peculiarly shaped rocks are supposed to have been formerly human beings, who have become petrified, generally as a punishment.[73] Not only may sentient beings be changed into rocks, but they may also originally have issued from them. A Sumu legend traces the origin of that tribe to the Kaunapa Hill on the left bank of Rio Patuca, to a place where petrified navels are said to exist.

Trees and plants appear to be animated by spirits (M.: *lilka;* T., P.: *wayani;* U.: *wayaka*), which affect their growth and the ripening of their fruits. In order to increase the yield of a fruit tree, or to render barren trees productive, several objects are placed on their branches after having been blown upon (M.: *yabakan*) by the sukya. Vegetal attraction charms, which are carried for good luck in the various walks of life, would seem to point toward an original belief in plants possessing associated spirits.

Indians will keep at a certain distance from spirits and do not look at them nor point to them, nor even talk of them, as they might materialize, for, "speak of the devil and he is sure to appear." They even refuse to look at certain places haunted by evil spirits, and if they have to pass at close distance they will turn away the face in an opposite direction.

---

[72] This word has evidently a close philological connection with *Naualli*, the name of a magical high priest of the Aztecs; he was celibate and was supposed to assume animal shape at will. From his name is derived the term "nagualism," a species of sorcery still existing among the ignorant Ladinos in certain regions of Central America. *Nawa* or *nawah* is also the Sumu name for "puma" or "jaguar." Cf. also *naual* "sorcerer" and *naual-ik* "to predict, to enchant," in the Quiché language of Guatemala.

[73] On the right bank of Rio Coco, opposite Yaluk Hill, there are some rocks which are believed to be the petrified remains of a great Sumu sukya, named Panamaka, who lived on the said hill.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

The spirits may come to the neighborhood of human habitations in their anthropomorphic form and try to seduce Indians of the opposite sex, and abnormal children will be the result of this intimacy. Monstrosities among the animal and vegetable world are also held to be spirits. Just like snakes, these spirits are said to have a great passion for women at the menstrual periods.

CONNECTION OF SPIRITS WITH THE SILK-COTTON TREE.—The silk-cotton tree (M.: *sisin;* T., P.: *panya;* U.: *paniki*) is said to be the abode of the spirits of the departed, and no one ventures under it during the night. It must not be cut down, as by such an act the spirits would be robbed of their favorite resting place, and they would not fail to revenge themselves. Should it be absolutely necessary, however, to cut down a silk-cotton tree, the wrath of the spirits may be avoided by burying something at the foot of the tree in the shape of an offering, as food, red peppers, money, etc. When the tree has been felled, the object in question may be recovered. On Rio Lacus, a southern affluent of Rio Coco, a Sumu used for this purpose two small dolls or puppets (M.: *yapti;* S.: *ditalna*), which he had obtained from the sukya. This procedure, which savors of African origin, is the only case of this sort which I have met among the Sumu, but the habit in question is common enough among the Miskito.

The Indians also claim that a dugout made from the silk-cotton tree will groan continually during the night, and that at the same time it will travel with tremendous speed. A similar plaintive sound is said to be emitted during the dark by mattresses or pillows stuffed with the down adhering to the seeds of the tree. For the above-named reasons the credulous Indians make no use whatever of the haunted tree.

The Creoles and the West Indian Negroes dread this tree even more than do the Indians; according to them the spirit of the deceased, which they call "shadow" or "duppy," leaves the grave on the third day after death in order to roam about the woods, especially around the ceiba or silk-cotton trees. Some believe that these superstitions concerning the tree may have been taken from the Africans; still, the Maya of Yucatan and the Quiché of Guatemala, who have had practically no intercourse with Negroes, hold beliefs regarding the silk-cotton tree similar to those of the Miskito and Sumu.

CREATION OF MAN.—As stated above, the Miskito confound Thunder (*Alwasi*) and God (*Wan-Aisa, Dawan*) sometimes with one another, and both of these supernatural beings are looked upon as the creator of man and the world in general. The Sumu, however, consider the Sun-god (*Uhubapat*) as the Almighty God and Creator of everything, and in former days are supposed to have worshiped him.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

ordinary mortals. Thanks to these supposed powers, he is feared and respected far and wide. Such a state of affairs is occasionally very injurious to the Indian community as a whole, but in general abuses on the part of the sukya are not common.

Besides curing the sick, the advice of the sukya is sought in many instances. He is consulted in order to find out the whereabouts of a lost or stolen object, and he furnishes remedies to cure ill luck, to influence the heart of a person of the opposite sex, to increase the valor and courage of a man, and the like. He will inform the hunter how to proceed in order to secure plenty of game, for he has generally a good knowledge of the instincts and habits of animals. If he is unsuccessful, he claims that his client has transgressed some prescription.

Some of these shamans have some knowledge of astronomy; others imitate the voice of other persons or of animals and birds, and some appear to be clever ventriloquists. They foretell the death of a sick person, and help artificially by means of poison on the specified day, in order to strengthen their reputation.

The sukya will also be asked to harm an enemy by casting an evil spell over him. The usual method followed by the Miskito sukya is to fire a gun in the direction of the person upon whom he wishes to inflict injury. His Sumu confrère will send disease or death by mistreating or stabbing an object, usually a doll or puppet (M.: *yapti;* S.: *ditalna*), made of white tunu bark, and supposed to represent the intended victim. Some of these sorcerers are also said to transform themselves into a snake or jaguar and then harm their enemy.

There are good and bad sukyas, who are sometimes at feud with each other. In his own village the sukya is generally said to be good, but in the neighboring settlement there is a bad one, whom he has to fight and send away the evil spirit which the latter despatches in order to cause disease and death. The bad sukya will, for instance, send an animal or bird with poison to the neighboring village, but his confrère from the latter settlement sees it coming and sends it back. The animal goes hither and thither, until finally the "stronger" of the two opponents wins.

INITIATION OF THE SUKYA.—The choosing of his career by the sukya is supposed not to be voluntary. A person whom destiny has picked out for this high office is said to come under the influence of some spirits, from whom he is unable to deliver himself. During the night he acts like an insane person; he gets up from bed and talks with invisible beings in a mysterious "spirit" language.

In this state he makes prophecies, and if these come true his friends will urge him to become a sukya. He then prepares himself for his career through fastings, vigils, and other means of achieving exhaustion and the novice will be reduced to a skeleton. During this

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

time he will come under the influence of some sort of tutelary spirit which henceforth will act as his protector; this may be the spirit of a person, animal, plant, hill, cloud, star, etc., or some other kind of supernatural being, by whose intermediacy the would-be sukya may converse with the evil spirits. This conception of guardian spirits is found in large areas of America, and it has probably not originated from the tutelary angel of the missionaries.

The candidate is then ready to exercise his profession, but on the day of initiation his food must be prepared according to a manner prescribed by custom. It must be cooked by a young boy or girl, not yet arrived at the age of puberty; a slender hardwood tree, called *liwdi*, which grows very sparsely in the forest and burns readily in the green state, must be used as firewood.

The sukya is obliged from time to time to strengthen his powers by religiously abstaining from certain food and sexual intercourse, and in other ways lead a life of self-denial.

Among the Sumu any candidate for priestly and medical honors must perform the fire dance; this fiery ordeal must also be repeated occasionally in order to strengthen the connection with the unseen powers. A big pile of *liwdi* wood is made in a cleared spot in the bush and the whole is covered by a thick layer of bijagua leaves. Fire is then put to the whole, and when in full blaze, the sukya issues from the forest. He has the whole body smeared with black paint, and is entirely naked save for a loin cloth. He then walks upon the pile and remains there standing quietly until the wood is partly consumed. Then he orders the fire divided into four parts, and walks from one pile to the other with his bare feet until all the wood is burned. Strangers are never allowed to witness this performance. The Miskito greatly respect the Sumu sukya for this act which their own sorcerers are unable to perform.

Roberts states that the fire dance is also done by the sukya of the San Blas Indians (Panama), and that the effects of the fire are resisted by some powerful antidote extracted from vegetable fibers. This ordeal is also performed by the shamans of Raiatea (Society Islands), Kandavu (Fiji Islands), and of a tribe in British India, but it has apparently not been observed in other parts of the world.

THE OKULI.—The okuli[48] is the highest shaman among the Miskito and there never should be more than one at a time. The Sumu do not have any sorcerer ranking above the sukya, but many of them recognize the okuli of the Miskito.

The okuli is said to be a special representative of *Alwani*, the thunder-god, or of *Aubiya* (or *Prahaku*), the lord of the air, and is supposed to control the elements. He is much more powerful than

[48] Among the Bribri Indians of Costa Rica *oke* is the name for a sort of shaman.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

MISCELLANEOUS BELIEFS REGARDING FICTITIOUS BEINGS SAID TO INHABIT THE FOREST AND THE WATER

Living in dark and gloomy forests, the limits of which are unknown to them, the ideas of the Indians naturally turn toward the mysterious and wonderful, and they people in their imagination the unexplored regions of the country with fabulous monsters, or *unta dukya* as the Miskito call them generally.

DWARFS.—In certain parts of the forest may be found some dwarfs (M.: *swalin, almuk-sirpi;* S.: *asaŋ mōikni, asaŋ mōihka*) of the size of children, but they are considered entirely harmless, and an encounter with one of them is even held to bring good luck.

WANDERING JEW.—The belief of the existence of a wandering human being, the *tawisti sari-ka* or *sawa-sari*, so named by the Paya, has also spread to the neighboring Twahka, who have translated the name into *tik-suba*, but it is unknown to the other tribes; the Miskito of Rio Patuca, however, appear to call this mysterious being *tismila*. This man continually travels through the world with one of his hands placed in a cooking pot from which he is unable to extricate it. From time to time he beats with the pot against the trees, thereby producing a deep thunderlike noise, in order to break the vessel and liberate himself, but all his efforts are in vain. When he still was a boy, he was in the habit of eating the best part of the food before mealtime, leaving only the cassava and bananas for the other members of the family. His parents frequently scolded him for doing that, but he would not listen to them. One day the cooking pot closed up at the very moment he had his hand inside, and he was unable to withdraw it. Since that time he travels continuously through the bush like the Wandering Jew.

PECCARY OWNER.—The peccaries, especially the variety called warree, are said to have a keeper or owner (M.: *wari dawan;* T., P.: *siwi dawasa;* U.: *sawi dakawaa*), who inhabits the caves of the interior, and occasionally retreats thereto with all the animals under his custody. In former times he is said to have been visible sometimes, accompanied by a drove of very fierce, large, white warrees. In order to guide his animals to a good feeding ground, he places with each herd a pet bird (M.: *wari yula;* T., P.: *siwi turukma;* U.: *sawi turukma;* these words literally mean "companion of the warree"). This bird, which may generally be found around a drove of peccaries, feeds probably on the ticks or other parasitic insects living on these animals. The Indians do not dare to kill it, as by such an act they would incur the wrath of the peccary owner. Some details pertaining

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

776
825

to this fictitious being are given by Bell (b: 221–224). I submit herewith a Sumu story dealing with the peccary owner, which I propose naming:

The Adventures of the Peccary Hunter

539

A Sumu went out to the bush to hunt the white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu* sp.). Suddenly he came upon a drove of a white variety, called *sduakaya*, with very long tails and tusks. All of them were very fat. Our Indian had never seen a specimen of this variety before, but he had heard of its existence from the older people, who had, however, never succeeded in killing one.

He stalked upon them, but at the very moment he got his bow and arrow ready to shoot the whole drove made off at great speed. He followed their trails, determined not to go home without one of them. After a while he caught up with them, and saw them feeding on the fruits of the hog plum tree (*Spondias lutea* L.), but again they made off all together when he was at the point of sending an arrow at them. This was repeated again and again, and our Indian was unable to make use of his arrows. Still he kept on following them.

Suddenly he saw the whole drove disappearing into a cave. He followed, although it was pitch dark inside, for he could smell and hear them. After a while he came to a wall of solid rock which blocked his passage. He then made a small incision under his tongue and applied a little blood crosswise upon the rocks. Immediately the latter receded and he was able to proceed. Again he could hear and smell the peccaries in front of him. This was repeated several times.

Finally the Indian saw a streak of light ahead of him and directly he found himself outside the cave in a strange country, which abounded in the various varieties of peccaries. The large white kind, the *sduakaya*, must have been the favorite food of the inhabitants, for in every house they were preparing a specimen for the table. The people were not friendly toward our Sumu, and they resented his having come to their land. He explained to them how it all happened, and that he was anxious to secure some meat for his wife and children. They told him then that they were the owners of all the peccaries, and that occasionally they sent some droves to the Sumu country, so as to enable the inhabitants there to have some meat to eat occasionally. But the white peccary (*sduakaya*), they proceeded, "is for our exclusive use and for that reason the Sumu have never been able to shoot any of them." The people fed our Sumu and gave him a whole white peccary to take back home to his family. But they warned him not to mention anything about his adventure, as that would cause his immediate death. Then he was told to close his eyes, and some one took him by the hand and led him away. After

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

a little while, feeling himself alone, he opened his eyes, and looking around, he found himself only a few steps from his own house.

Upon getting home, his wife wanted to know where he had been so long. He refused to tell the truth for fear of the revenge of the people from the peccary country, and told her that he had been lost in the bush. But she noticed that he was hiding the truth and kept on insisting that something extraordinary must have happened for his having succeeded in killing a *sĕuakaya*.

Finally he agreed to tell. He sat in his hammock, while all the neighbors surrounded him to hear the details of his strange adventure, and then he proceeded to narrate everything that had happened to him since he left home. But the moment he finished his story he died.

WITCHES.—Certain people of either sex are supposed to be greatly addicted to witchcraft, and to be able to transform themselves at will into owls or "lechuzas" (M.: *imi yula* or *kimi yula;* S.: *yala mŏlh*[11]).

Some bad people transform themselves into a smaller species of owl (T.: *yarak;* U.: *sŏl*) and in their zoömorphic form introduce themselves during the night into the huts of their enemies, when the latter are asleep, in order to carry off the small children. The Miskito do not participate in this belief.

CYCLOPS.—In the bush lives also a curious being, shaped somewhat like a giant human being, but having a head similar to that of a dog. It has only one eye, while its large mouth is at the navel.

WATER NYMPH.—The mermaid or water nymph (M.: *liwa;* T., P.: *was molhni;* U.: *was sirdŭ*) is an evil water animal, which occasionally causes snags and strong ripples where the water otherwise is very smooth. It drives the fish away so that the Indian can not catch anything, and it incites the alligator to attack the canoes and upset them. It also assumes the shape of a beautiful woman and walks on land to entice the young men down to the waterside, when suddenly it pushes its victim into the water and devours it. Its head is that of a human being, but the body resembles that of a fish. This monster is also said to inhabit the sea, where it occasions waterspouts and hurricanes; the Miskito living at the coast call it also *kabo wlaska* "sea spirit."

WAIWIN OR WAIWAN.—This name is applied by Miskito, Sumu, Rama, and Creoles to a black, doglike bush animal, with a nose shaped like that of the large anteater and with fiery eyes similar to balls of fire. It corresponds approximately to the "cadejo" of the Ladinos. Its claws rattle on the ground as it runs along with great swiftness. It spits fire and does not do any harm if left unmolested, but will throw down on the ground any one trying to stop it. There

[11] Lit., "people of the stars."

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

is an elaboration of aboriginal customs, encouraged by the English. Early records indicate that the *Sumo*, *Paya*, and *Jicaque* developed similar but perhaps less complicated organizations in order to resist the Spanish Conquest. Probably they too had waged war previous to the 16th century, but available data do not permit identification of aboriginal customs.

Among the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* all men were potential warriors. They were arranged according to military ranks, which were distinguished by feather insignia. The warriors, particularly of the *Sumo*, were subject to severe tests including dietary restrictions, and they celebrated various ceremonies. Women were not permitted to attend these ceremonies, and the warriors were not supposed to have any relations with women. Before a battle shamans were consulted. The warriors, painted black, usually attacked the enemy at night. The *Mosquito* took prisoners to be sold as slaves to the Whites. The *Sumo* killed as many of the enemy as possible. They mutilated the corpses and wore the teeth and fingernails as trophies. Some of the *Sumo* reputedly ate the roasted flesh of their enemies in order to inflict further insult upon them and to make sure that they were completely destroyed.

ESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Dances and music.—All ceremonies are the time for much intoxication, dancing, and singing. On frequent occasions the *Mosquito* sing in groups or singly. There are many kinds of dances, some of them specially for women and others for particular ceremonies. There are two types of drums: a goblet-shaped drum used in funeral and memorial ceremonies and a drum of European origin which is used in some of the ceremonies and, perhaps, as a signal drum. Conch-shell trumpets and reed or bone flutes with one to four stops are blown. *Sumo* and *Mosquito* shamans use flutes 6 feet (2 m.) long. The musical bow, with or without a gourd sounding box, is played by women. Gourd rattles are also used.

RELIGION

The *Sumo*, *Mosquito*, and *Paya* believe in a deity, called "Our Father," who lives in the sky. He is little interested in mankind, is too far removed to be approached by humans, and has little influence upon human affairs. The sun, moon, and stars, especially the Pleiades, are considered to be supernatural beings. They figure in the mythology and are of some significance in the religious philosophy. Solar and lunar eclipses, thunder, wind, the rainbow, and other celestial phenomena are explained by myths. The last three are the agents of the major deities.

A *Sumo* creation myth recounts the activities of two brothers who made the animals out of maize cobs. People are believed to have been made from rays of the sun. The *Paya* believe that their god sowed men in the

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

773 same way that manioc is planted. Some of the tribes recount a myth of a great flood. The *Jicaque* believe in two benevolent deities and a female
● 776 god of evil. No offerings are made to the "good" deities, but attempts are made to placate the "evil" one, a female who is responsible for all misfortune and who causes death.

775 The *Sumo* and *Mosquito* and possibly the *Paya* believe that after death the soul makes its way eastward over a difficult route to a nether world of plenty and happiness. The description of the route traveled and the acts performed by the survivors of the deceased to aid the progress of his soul on this road differ from tribe to tribe. Under certain conditions the soul may remain about the house of the deceased and even occupy his former belongings, including domestic animals. For this reason these things must be destroyed.

778 The *Sumo*, *Mosquito*, and *Paya* believe that the world is populated with
789 innumerable spirits. These haunt hills, caves, deep pools of water, and other places, and they are responsible for most misfortunes including sickness and death. A large part of the work of shamans is to placate these spirits, to drive them out of sick people, and otherwise to destroy them. Protection from the bad spirits is afforded by amulets and charms.

SHAMANISM

756 Most *Sumo* and *Mosquito* settlements have a shaman, who may take part in secular affairs but whose chief duty is to cure the sick. Shamans possess some spiritual power, but very little is known of the various rituals through which it is acquired. Sons and sometimes sons-in-law may
755 succeed a shaman. Curing varies in detail according to the individual shaman and the spirits addressed. A shaman goes into a trance in which he contacts the spirits and, in one way or another, drives them out of the afflicted person. Curing rituals also include songs, dances, and the use of painted sticks, carved figures, and other paraphernalia. Some diseases are cured by the imposition of diets, the prohibition of sexual intercourse, and other restrictions. Complicated diseases or village-wide epidemics are isolated and receive special medical and ceremonial treatment. Infections, snake bites, and diseases such as malaria are cured by both shamans and laymen, the latter using infusions of herbs and a large number of native medicines. Steam baths followed by a cold plunge are also employed. Baths in hot springs and partial burial in hot sand are common practices, especially among the *Sumo*. When surgery is necessary a shaman employs
[778] knives made of obsidian, flint, bone, and such. Ashes, tobacco, wax, and resin are used as antiseptics.

756 A shaman may also prophesy the future or determine the route hunters
[787] should take in order to find game. By conjuring, a shaman may cause
[754] harm to come to people. A shaman may be retained by a person to eliminate an enemy.